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## THE ITALIAN OPERA.

(From the "Saturday Review," July 24.)

Between the revival of *La Gazza Ladra* and the production of the eagerly looked for *Hamlet*, nothing worthy note occurred. Fresh performances of *Il Trovatore*, the *Huguenots*—with Mdlle. Sinico, vice Mdlle. Ilma di Murska, as the Queen, Signor Tagliafico, vice Mr. Santley, as St. Bris, and a minor alteration or two (no improvements in any case)—the irrepressible *Faust*, and the happily perennial *Barbiere*, may surely pass without comment, if not without a protest that the subscribers have been compelled to listen to these masterpieces somewhat oftener of late than was in all probability welcome to the majority.

At length came *Hamlet*, which might be almost dismissed in a sentence—as a new triumph for Mdlle. Christine Nilsson, and a new sign of the rapid progress Mr. Santley is making as an actor. Not a few of our contemporaries, however, were sufficiently industrious to write long and elaborate notices of this singularly pretentious and for the greater part as singularly feeble opera—an opera in which a Frenchman, possessing a certain amount of musical capacity, has chiefly been able to show how superficially he understands, and yet how eager is his desire to follow in the footsteps of, that subtle, though hopelessly mistaken preacher, Herr Richard Wagner. True, in several instances their articles were ushered in by lengthy preambles about the desecration of Shakspeare, about the profanity of MM. Barbier and Carré in meddling with one of the sublimest inspirations of the greatest of all poets (whom, as an Englishman, it was impossible for Frenchmen to comprehend), and about the absurdity of a French composer endeavouring to set even the faintest reflex of the Shaksperian text to appropriate music. And yet, after all, the superior difficulty of manipulating *Hamlet* borne in mind, MM. Barbier and Carré have done their work quite as skillfully as when engaged in a similar task for M. Gounod, whose *Romeo et Juliette* is almost as weak an example of the Wagnerian precepts as *Hamlet* itself—with the proviso that *bona fide* French tunes are less plentiful in the latter than in the former, which may be accounted for by the fact that M. Gounod is a reader if not a more novel manufacturer of rhythmical melody than M. Thomas. That MM. Barbier and Carré prepared their *libretto* by the aid of a French translation is as easy to see as it is easy to believe that M. Thomas has never read the *Hamlet* of Shakspeare. At the same time, they may cite precedents without number, among the most illustrious being certain operas by Gluck, the books of which were compiled, not from the originals, but from translations, or imitations, of the tragedies of Euripides. Just as the *Medea* of Euripides was afterwards diluted for Cherubini, the *Edipus* of Sophocles had been similarly treated on behalf of Sacchini, whose countryman, Piccini, like many other Italians on various occasions, found materials second-hand in the classics, ancient and modern. How Alfieri has been ransacked by Italian composers it is unnecessary to say; nor how many metamorphoses Shakspeare has undergone for the convenience of Italian, German, and French musicians, from the time of Zingarelli's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* down to that of M. Gounod's recent version of the same tragedy. The question lies in a nutshell. If it is lawful to draw upon the classic masterpieces, MM. Barbier and Carré committed no unpardonable sin in making an opera-book out of *Hamlet*. M. Thomas had already, in *Mignon*, laid rude hands upon Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, and with more questionable taste set to music a miserable hash from Shakspeare, under the title of *Un Songe d'une Nuit d'Été*, in which Elizabeth, his queen and patron, Sir John Falstaff, his creation, and the immortal bard himself, figure in the most grotesque manner among the *dramatis personæ*. In *Hamlet*, at least, the authors have endeavoured to fashion their plot in such a manner as to give the leading situations in tolerably faithful succession. Thus we have seven *tableaux*. In the first, Claudius crowns Gertrude; in the second, the meeting takes place between Hamlet and his father's spirit; in the third, we have the interview during which Hamlet's feigned indifference rouses the suspicions of the King and Queen, and confirms the despair of Ophelia; in the fourth, the players and the play; in the fifth, the scene between Hamlet and his mother, the comparison of the portraits of father and uncle, and the final interposition of the Ghost; in the sixth, the madness and death of Ophelia; and in the seventh, the cemetery, with the defiance of Laertes over the grave, followed by the death of the King at the hands of Hamlet, who, in agreement with a French version by Dumas the elder and his accomplice, Paul Meurice, is declared King of Denmark—the Queen, Laertes, and Polonius all surviving, the first to expiate her sins by penitence, the others to become courtiers in the new court. The most pointed departures from the English tragedy—of which we need scarcely add how little more than a skeleton is offered—are, first, in the fact that as Hamlet does not kill Polonius we are afforded no sufficient explanation of Ophelia's subsequent conduct; and secondly, that the scene of Ophelia's death, which in the tragedy is described by the Queen in the well-known passage—

"There is a willow grows aslant a brook  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream," &c.

is in the opera visibly presented; so that the success of *Hamlet*, here, no less than at Paris and elsewhere, depends exclusively upon a scene not to be met with in the play. Hamlet, moreover, suspects Polonius of having been an accomplice in the crime upon which the entire plot is made to hang; and with this his strange and cruel behaviour to Ophelia is connected by innuendo, a modification that, while derogating from the nobility of the Prince of Denmark, transforms—as a contemporary has observed—"an instance of sublime self-denial into common-place resentment against an innocent person." But enough has been said of the libretto. Let us briefly consider the music.

In those more serious parts of the opera, which it might have been expected would inspire the musician with the loftiest ideas, M. Thomas fails to impress us with a sense of his power. Thus the interview with the Ghost (Scene 2) results at the best in a *caput mortuum*; while the still more interesting scene between Hamlet and Gertrude, a flash here and there excepted, is almost equally destitute of high musical interest. The idea of making the Ghost deliver all his ponderous sentences in monotone was good enough; but it is carried out in so strained and artificial a manner, that it produces no such solemn effect as might have been anticipated. In short, music without plan is no music at all; and if music is to be the accepted medium of expression it must be as consistent in its method of expression as any other art. Great stress has been laid upon the extraordinary excellence of the orchestration in these particular parts of the opera, and the no less extraordinary variety of figures in the accompaniments; but independently of the fact that we are unable to see the remarkable merit of M. Thomas's orchestration, which seems to us, as a rule, cumbrous and patchy, the mere device of giving to each division of a scene a certain instrumental figure to characterize it, amounts to nothing unless that figure is fully developed, and each section thereby made to form an organic whole—as, for example, in the first *finale* of Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro*, which, besides being amply developed in every division, is infinitely more faithful to the dramatic situations than anything to be cited in *Hamlet*. We say it regretfully with reference to a work so much vaunted by certain authorities; but truth and respect for genuine art alike compel us to insist that wherever in *Hamlet* the composer has attempted to soar, he is lost in what Herr Wagner, speaking about the later music of Robert Schumann, quaintly and not inaptly terms a "bombastic flatness." How unlike the real masters, who could rise with the situation, and the higher the calls upon them the more readily were inspired! M. Thomas labours hard to seem profound, but does not succeed. In the lighter portions of his work we find him the Thomas of old, the Thomas of the *Double Echelle*, the *Caid*, the *Song d'une Nuit d'Été*, &c.—no deeper than some mountain-streams in August, but with a kind of sheen and sparkle that attract attention. Some severe critics, in extenuation of his other shortcomings, will have it that M. Thomas has treated the character of Ophelia with an unmistakably poetical grasp and completeness. We cannot join in this opinion. On the contrary, we are forced to speculate (with sorrow that it can never be put to the proof) upon what Mendelssohn would have done with the same character—upon what an ethereal grace and tenderness he would have thrown around it! The phrase in which Hamlet declares the inviolability of his love, "Nega se vuol la luce" (a free parody of "Doubt thou the stars are fire," &c.) and which Ophelia recalls just before she involuntarily drowns herself, might have been imagined by almost any French composer possessed of more or less sentiment. Her first and, indeed, only soliloquy—where, by the tones of her voice, employed in reading aloud an ancient legend, Ophelia vainly strives to lure her "tassel-gentle back again"—begins with a melody both quaint and charming, but no more apparently the composition of M. Ambroise Thomas than the Swedish air, the gem of that scene which is also the gem of the opera. Had M. Thomas written this last-named scene, and nothing else—always providing that he met with a Christine Nilsson to interpret it—his name would have been bruited as the composer of one of the most picturesque and admirable lyric passages in existence. Nothing can be more catching in its way than the opening tune, in waltz measure; and this is so well contrasted with the plaintive Swedish melody, "Bianca e bionda," when the distracted maiden addresses the invisible Siren—the interpolation of which was not less happy than that of the "Last Rose of Summer" in M. Flotow's *Martha*—as to afford the composer opportunities for unaccustomed variety of effect. M. Thomas, it must be admitted, has made excellent use of the chance thus afforded him; and though his harmonization of the Swedish air is not original, but chiefly borrowed from a part-song familiar to collectors of national melodies, his conduct of the entire scene is masterly. Both the fitful gaiety and deep melancholy of Ophelia find apt means for musical utterance; and the whole hangs so well together, that it is scarcely possible to find



fault with any part of it. The termination, when Ophelia is borne, unconsciously, down the stream, uttering wild snatches of tune, while the plaintive Swedish melody is breathed with shut lips, behind the scenes, by the chorus, supposed to represent the sirens who draw the hapless maiden to her fate, is in every sense exquisite. In this scene, we repeat, lies the secret of the success of an opera which, however spectacular splendour may have held it up for a season or two in Paris, would never—for reasons we are not called upon to state again—have had a chance of taking hold of the London public. And once more, let us insist, that it owes the greater part of the impression it has created, abroad no less than at home, to the inimitable performance of Mdlle. Nilsson. So ideal an Ophelia has probably not been seen till now upon the stage. It is almost impossible to dream of anything more irresistibly fascinating than the appearance and general deportment, more absolutely perfect than the vocal execution, of this accomplished lady—as a singer another Jenny Lind, as an actress something beyond anything that Jenny Lind, in the height of her popularity attained. With this striking *tableau*—the 6th of MM. Barbier and Carré—the Italian version of *Hamlet* at the Royal Italian Opera now closes; and we can cheerfully dispense with the remainder, which, after it, would have had little interest, which was presented in a greatly abridged form on the first occasion, and which has been wholly superseded since.

Mr. Santley deserves almost as much credit for his impersonation of Hamlet as Mdlle. Nilsson for hers of Ophelia. A more uphill, ungrateful part was never perhaps undertaken by a dramatic singer. Even the "Bacchanalian" with which Hamlet enlivens the players (instead of edifying them with the well-known piece of advice) is but a heavy piece of work—such a piece of work as would not have greatly shone in one of those comic operas which are the more natural and congenial element of M. Thomas. Mr. Santley, however, sings it to perfection, as, indeed, he does all the music set down for him, while his histrionic conception and realization of the character (as MM. Barbier and Carré set it forth) have advanced him still another step in public estimation. The other parts are less well sustained. Gertrude, the Queen, which was at first assigned to Mdlle. Tietjens, who declined it for reasons only known to herself, is ill-suited to Mdlle. Sinico; Signor Baggiolo is the heaviest of bad kings; and the spectre of the good king could hardly have found a more unsuitable representative than Signor Ciampi. Of the rest we need not speak. Though, as we are inclined to believe, prepared somewhat hastily, the opera is well put upon the stage; and Signor Arditì (happily), the conductor, deserves warm praise for the admirable execution of the choral and orchestral music, which he was mainly instrumental in obtaining, and which is said to have astonished M. Thomas himself, accustomed in Paris to rehearsals without stint, as much as the first performances of *L'Etoile du Nord* and *Dinorah*, after two full rehearsals, under Sir Michael Costa, astonished the late Meyerbeer. That *Hamlet* is a success may be assumed from the many times it has been played; but in the absence of Mdlle. Nilsson we very much doubt whether it would have outlived a couple of trials—in London at any rate.

The revival of Meyerbeer's *Dinorah*, which (with the intervention of more "Lucias," "Barbieres," "Fausts," &c.) followed the introduction of *Hamlet*, was interesting, inasmuch as *Dinorah*, Corentino, and Hoel were represented by Madame Adelina Patti, Signor Gardoni and Mr. Santley. Madame Patti, as far back as 1862, proved herself the best *Dinorah* that either the French or Italian stage had hitherto witnessed; and the interval having matured her then remarkable promise into something as near perfection as can well be imagined, it is superfluous to say that she has not gone back. Signor Gardoni was the first Corentino at Covent Garden, when the Italian version of *Le Pardon de Plornet* was produced (with Madame Miolan-Carvalho and Signor Graziani), under Meyerbeer's immediate supervision (1859); and in the part of Hoel Mr. Santley made his *début* as a dramatic singer, during the autumn of that year, when Miss Louisa Pyne and the late Mr. W. Harrison gave English Opera at the same theatre. What Mr. Santley's Hoel was and what it is now may best be measured by what Mr. Santley himself was then and what he is now. Ten years with him have worked wonders. An absolute tyro has ripened into a practised artist. Thus we have Meyerbeer's delightful pastoral thoroughly well represented in so far as the three chief characters are concerned—as well, indeed, as could be desired. Mdlle. Scalchi is not by any means equal to some of her predecessors as the principal Goatherd; but the minor parts are all adequately filled, and the delicately-woven orchestral accompaniments, under Signor Arditì's direction, are faultlessly played. This, with the *mise en scène*, always so picturesque at Covent Garden, may readily explain why the three performances of *Dinorah*, late as they came, were among the most effective and welcome of the season. As Maria, in *La Figlia del Reggimento* (after more "Hamlets," "Lucias," "Don Giovannis," and "Fausts"), Madame Patti renewed her triumph of last year. We need not recur to her

sprightly and admirable impersonation of the Vivandière, which preserves all its old charm; and we can only regret that such a Maria is not mated with worthier associates than those to whom the other characters are allotted. Nevertheless, "Ciascun lo dice," the "Rataplan," and the Lesson-scene create the same impression as ever; and the lively music of Donizetti's prettiest, perhaps best, French opera, is listened to with the same hearty enjoyment.

We have had no *Etoile du Nord* and no *Otello*—which does not say much for the faith of a coalition management; but we have had two performances of the *Prophète*, in which Mdlle. Tietjens, for the first time, essayed the character of Fides. Let us hope that it may also be the last; for, wonderfully clever and versatile as this lady is, she cannot afford to imperil her magnificent voice, which she unquestionably does in forcing it to labour so ungratefully. At the first representation of the *Prophète* Signor Mongini played Jean of Leyden, at the second (the other night) Signor Tamberlik. The part is not at all suited to Signor Mongini, but it is one of those in which the public have long been accustomed to hear and applaud Signor Tamberlik, to whom (as also to Signor Mongini) it would have been juster to assign it exclusively. Signor Mongini has done excellent service this season, and his many admirers would have much preferred seeing him take his leave in one of those characters to which he is indebted for his fairly earned renown. On both occasions the always efficient Mdlle. Sinico—who only lacks that indefinable something to make her more than she is, in the absence of which she must be content to remain a first-class "comprimaria"—played Bertha. In general respects these performances of Meyerbeer's great work were the most unsatisfactory remembered at Covent Garden.

We can merely state that in *Rigoletto*—which had been already given (with Mdlle. Vanzini) this season—Madame Adelina Patti added one more to her successes, and proved herself the best singing Gilda since Madame Bosio, and incomparably the best acting Gilda we have seen. Of Mr. Santley's *Rigoletto* we spoke in eulogistic terms last year, when he first essayed the character at Her Majesty's Opera, Drury Lane. It is now even better than before. Signor Foli sings the part of Sparafucile well enough, but scarcely imparts to it the dramatic significance to which Signor Tagliafico for so many years accustomed us. Nor is Mdlle. Scalchi nearly so good a Maddelena as we have known. Signor Tamberlik's Duke of Mantua is the nearest to Signor Mario's we can recall; though upon his voice, as upon that of his distinguished compatriot, years have begun to tell. Nevertheless, style, phrasing, and a pure method of declamation such as are now rare upon the Italian stage, remain to both, and in a great measure compensate for physical shortcomings.

With a miscellaneous performance (last night) consisting of acts from *Martha*, *Faust*, and *Hamlet*, in all of which Mdlle. Nilsson was to appear, and the *Barbiere*, with Madame Patti as Rosina (this evening), the season terminates. It is the first "coalition-season," and very many lovers of the Opera devoutly pray it may be the last. That in a financial sense the joint-directors have been more than ordinarily successful is likely; but the subscribers and the public generally are by no means satisfied. Only two novelties (one of them—*Don Bucefalo*—contemptible) have been produced; the revivals were few and far between; and the execution of the great spectacular operas has for the most part been extremely mediocre. The system of two conductors—one good, the other bad—proved an entire failure, as might have been expected. In short, the season will be chiefly remembered as one in which two young *prime donne* of exceptional ability—Madame Adelina Patti and Mdlle. Christine Nilsson—were pitted against each other, so as to create a spirit of partisanship beneficial to neither. As advocates of the public interests rather than of the interests of speculators, we feel bound to speak thus openly; and if the report of a powerful opposition, announced but recently by an evening contemporary, prove well founded, we can only add that we shall be very glad to know it. There is plenty of room for two operahouses in this world of a city.

[It must always be understood that our reproduction of articles from the pages of our contemporaries by no means insinuates that we endorse all their criticisms and opinions.—ED. M. W.]

MR. AND MRS. GERMAN REED'S ENTERTAINMENT.—No Cards and Cox and Box (with the charming music of Mr. A. S. Sullivan) were given on Monday, for the 127th time, at the Royal Gallery of Illustration. The present highly-successful entertainment will bring the season to a close at the end of next week. We have no doubt that the Gallery will be eagerly patronized by all who have not yet had an opportunity of enjoying one of the best performances of the year, as well as by very many that have. During the autumnal vacation it is Mr. Reed's intention to take a short tour in the provinces, accompanied by Mr. Arthur Cecil.

### A Record of the Past.

The Royal Italian Opera opened yesterday evening, with Rossini's magnificent *Guillaume Tell*. There could hardly, we think, have been a wiser choice. The frequent representations of this great work stamped the season of 1861 as emphatically the "*Guillaume Tell* season." Then, for the first time, indeed, its merits were thoroughly appreciated. A series of attempts which, however creditable, proved more or less abortive, had at length been crowned with triumphant success; and the hitherto difficult task of rendering the production of an opera which, though extolled to the skies by musicians and connoisseurs, could never really be made to "pay," an undertaking profitable as well as honourable to the management, had been accomplished. *Guillaume Tell* is likely henceforward to remain an established favourite at the Royal Italian Opera, to be brought forward at intervals year after year. It is hoped that the promised revival of Meyerbeer's *Robert*, which up to this time has proved scarcely luckier than its illustrious contemporary, may be followed by equally gratifying results. If the same pains are bestowed and the same liberality exhibited as in the instance of Rossini's masterpiece, it may be taken for granted that such will be the case.

The style in which *Guillaume Tell* is produced at this establishment is happily so familiar to our readers that to say the representation "was as usual" would suffice to bring back every important point, recall every stirring and picturesque incident, musical, scenic, or dramatic. Under the circumstances this is fortunate, and hardly less so the fact that the "cast" was almost precisely the same as on former occasions. Otherwise the very late hour at which the curtain descended—to rise again for one of those peculiar versions of our National Anthem which the "*zèle d'occasion*" of our excellent foreign visitors incites them to exhibit for our entertainment—would have allowed us to offer only a very inadequate description of a performance in many respects one of the most remarkable that has graced the records of Italian Opera in England. The house was crowded in every part (a *Guillaume Tell*, *Don Giovanni*, or *Fidelio* audience, in short), and the cheerful aspect of the interior—which has been painted, cleaned, and thoroughly renovated for the season—seemed to put every one in high spirits. The prevalent good humour had speedily an opportunity of venting itself upon Mr. Costa, whose appearance in the orchestra was hailed with unanimous plaudits. Then the overture (brilliantly executed, as we have a right to expect from such a band) was loudly re-demanded, Mr. Costa (possibly not quite in such "high spirits" as the audience) only partially complying with the demand, by repeating the martial movement—used as a *finale* at the end of the opera, in place of the one composed by Rossini himself, which, it must be confessed, is in every respect preferable. The opening scene ("on the shores of the Lake of the Four Cantons"), one of the triumphs of Mr. W. Beverley's pencil, was also re-welcomed with applause; and the exquisitely beautiful introduction—which, perfect as an abstract musical composition, breathes the very life of Swiss melody—was as great a treat as ever. M. Faure, whose admirable impersonation of Tell has won for him such just renown, was not directly singled out from the crowd; but his first recitative immediately obtained for him the recognition due to his merits. Signor Neri Baraldi gave the fisherman's *barcarolle*, which forms a part of the introduction, even better than usual—which is saying no little. Signor Tamberlik (Arnold) was received with enthusiasm, and the superb duet with Tell (generally known as "Dove vai")—in which occurs that incomparable *cantabile* phrase, "Ah, Matilde, io t'amo"—sung with appropriate vigour by the accomplished Roman and his intelligent French companion, created the impression inseparable from so fine an example of dramatic writing when adequately "interpreted." The melodious and expressive wedding prayer, with the dance and chorus that celebrate the nuptials of the young peasants, we have heard more smoothly rendered; but here, as everywhere else, indeed, the stage arrangements were unexceptionally good. The *finale*, illustrating the conflict between the Swiss people and their Austrian military oppressors, would have been irreproachable with a more competent representative of the shepherd (Leuthold), whom Tell rescues at the peril of his own life from the fury of Gesler, and whose disappearance down the torrent in the boat was by no means an inauspicious occurrence. Signor Polonini (the very best of Melchials), Madame Rudersdorff (the cleverest and most demonstrative of Gemmys), Signor Rossi (Rodolph, the Austrian captain), and Madame Tagliafico (Ednige), were all that could be wished in their respective parts—the chorus, and still more emphatically the orchestra, performing the important duties assigned to them in this graphic, animated, and splendid *finale* in a manner that left nothing to desire.

The second act, however—as is always the case, owing to its greater variety and stronger dramatic interest—was the real "sensation"

point. If the word "sensation," applied to operatic performances, may be understood in its literal sense, then is *Guillaume Tell*, without doubt, a "sensation" opera, for the lyric drama presents no single scene more calculated to create a sensation of the liveliest kind than the meeting of the Cantons and the swearing of the oath of liberty, preceded by the superlative trio in which Tell and Walter disclose to Arnold the news of his father's murder. A few more such passages would have raised the "libretto" upon which Rossini has in a great measure sacrificed music in its way unparalleled from an insipid and ill-conducted drama to one of real human feeling and the deepest interest. The trio in question was superbly given by Signor Tamberlik, M. Faure, and M. Zelger (Walter), the pathetic tones of Signor Tamberlik, and his truly impassioned delivery, in Arnold's famous apostrophe to his murdered parent, moving the sympathies of the whole audience, who applauded him with rapture. Previous to this Signor Tamberlik had already made a profound impression in the passionate love-duet with Mathilde, which he never sang more finely, and in which Madame Miolan Carvalho (Mathilde)—despite the anti-Rossinian ornaments and cadences with which she embellished both this and the delicious air, "Selva opaco" ("Sombres forêts"), in the first scene of the second act—exhibited a vocal facility and cleverness that demand acknowledgment. The opening of the act—with the alternate chorus of Austrian chasseurs and Swiss shepherds, on the distant shores of the lake (how picturesque both, and how artistically contrasted!), so beautifully painted by Mr. Beverley; and the climax—in which the representatives of the cantons meet, and after, one by one, declaring the motives that incite them to revolt, unite, under the auspices of the three leaders, Tell, Arnold, and Walter, in taking the oath—were alike in every sense perfect; and the curtain fell on the patriotic exclamation, "All' armi! All' armi," amid applause as uproarious as it was legitimately earned. Of course, it was raised again, that not merely the principal singers, but every one engaged in the performance, might be included in the unanimous verdict of approval.

The incidents that elicited most attention in the third act (in spite of its numerous beauties, somewhat tame after what immediately precedes it) were the "Tyrolienne," extremely well danced by Mademoiselles Battalini, Esper, and Billon, to the accompaniment of one of the most delicious melodies ever expressed in choral harmony; the pathetic address of Tell to his son, from whose head, at the instigation of Gesler (M. Tagliafico), he is about to shoot the apple; and the grand *finale*, in which the exasperated people threaten their Austrian tyrant, while his myrmidons forcibly carry off their hero. The fourth act, as it stands in the Royal Italian Opera version, without the "O muto asil" ("Asile Héritaire") and "Corriam, voliam" ("Sûvez moi"), which Signor Tamberlik declaims with such magnificent energy, dealing out high C's from the chest ("*Us de poitrine*") with as much force and prodigality as if they were really of no account at all, would be a mere skeleton. This remarkable display, however, is enough to rouse the audience, and make them forget that Rossini ever composed a *finale*. Last night it was welcomed with all the old enthusiasm.

*Guillaume Tell* is to be repeated on Thursday and Saturday, the opera announced for Tuesday being the *Trovatore*, in which a new singer, Mademoiselle Gordosa, will sustain the part of Leonora, Signor Tamberlik that of Manrico, and Mr. Santley (his first appearance on the Italian Opera boards) that of Conte di Luna.

Ghost.

DAHMSTADT.—The Musikverein and the Mozartverein have agreed to give a concert together, for the purpose of covering the deficit left by the sixth Musical Festival of the Middle Rhine, a deficit amounting to one thousand, one hundred and sixty-nine florins.

HEIDELBERG.—There is not the slightest foundation for the report, which has been lately going the round of the papers, to the effect that the well-known historian, and, recently, writer on musical matters, Professor Gervinus, is dangerously ill.

MILAN.—A new opera, *I Romani nelle Gallie*, by Signor E. Bernardi, has been produced at the Teatro Cinielli. It was applauded, but is not destined to live very long.—Signor Bonola will again be manager of the Scala. One novelty of the forthcoming season will be Signor Gomez's new opera, *Guarany*.—Signor Bonetti, a composer, has left the Conservatory here a sufficient amount to produce an annual sum of 500 Italian lire, for the young musician who shall write the best opera.

BRUSSELS.—The following artists are engaged for the grand national fêtes, on the 27th, 28th, and 29th September:—Mesdames Marie Sass, Pauline Wertheimer, Eulalie Lemaire (harpist), MM. Agnesi, G. Gunz, Theodore Coulon, Vieuxtemps, Maily, and B. Fauconnier (the last two being organists). It was reported that Mesdames Lemmens-Sherrington and Joachim were also engaged, but such is not the fact.

## PASSAGES FROM MY LIFE.

## REMINISCENCES OF SPONTINI.\*

(Continued from page 541.)

The period for the Festival rapidly approached, and Spontini arrived punctually on the 18th May. I found him very much altered, and greatly fallen away. In former days I could have sworn that, if he had appeared in a civilian coat upon a parade ground, all the corporals and sergeants would have saluted him in military fashion, because they could not have failed to take him for a general in disguise. But this was now quite out of the question. He not only stooped, but he walked with an unsteady gait; the Berlin catastrophe had indeed shaken him severely, yet his eye still flashed fire, as of old, and the wildest kettle drummer would have stopped short in the midst of the most furious roll, had a threatening glance of that eye been directed towards him. As we had been carefully preparing everything for some weeks previously, it was arranged that we should have merely one piano rehearsal for the solo singers, and two full rehearsals, for everyone, with orchestra. But even at the rehearsal for the solo singers (Mdlle. Emma Babinig, now the wife of Dr. Mempe, Vienna; Mdlle. Sophie Schloss, now the widow of Herr Guhrau, Hamburgh; Herr Ernst Koch, chamber-singer to the Prince of Sondershausen, and singing-master, Cologne; Herr Michel Dumont Fier, deceased; and Herr Thelen, afterwards engaged at the Ducal Opera, Brunswick, deceased), it was evident that Spontini would subsequently experience some difficulty, as conductor, in keeping together a total of 786 persons, (chorus, 622, and orchestra 164; comprising 64 violinists; 24 violoncellists; and 20 double-bass players). He might have been fatigued with his journey perhaps, but the fact that he could not find his place in his own score, produced a melancholy impression on me, who had known him in his prime. He was most certain when engaged in explaining to the artists the characters they had to represent. Then (as every good operatic conductor ought to be) he was what he always had been, a dramatic instructor and singer, who understood the mimetic art and did not scruple to employ it when necessary. Mdlle. Babinig, who had just returned from the Paris Conservatory, and in whose veins there flowed actors' blood, thought it, therefore, nothing but natural that Spontini should explain to her that Amenaïs-Olympia is a child-like, retiring being, who scarcely dares to breathe in the presence of so queen-like a personage as Statira. To impress all this on her, Spontini dropped the General Music-Director, made himself quite small, and with his head leaning on one side, said with a look of virgin innocence in broken German: "I am poor leet! I shalld, not know who my moser ees," &c. But as to Sophie Schloss, who with her wonderfully beautiful voice, and vocal education, was always threatening to relapse into the comparatively cold oratorio style, she started back in affright, when Spontini endeavoured to assume gigantic proportions, and opened his eyes as far as he could: "For you ees zee vaif of zee great Alexandre and is on zee murdees trace, and curse zee *Cassandre*, because hee is knowing of zee murder." The gentlemen did not give much trouble. Ernst Koch, even before then at home upon the stage, was freer in his style than the two fair chamber-singers; that admirable artist, Michael Dumont, might have gone on the stage successfully at any moment, and Thelen brought to the part of the Hierophant not only a powerful voice but a length of stature which was to Spontini's taste, even in a concert-room. After this first rehearsal, however, which lasted only two hours, the old gentleman, then sixty-five, was so exhausted, that we were obliged to help him down from the orchestra into the body of the hall (our little meeting was held in the Gürzenich), where he had to rest some time by the side of his amiable lady, who was tenderly solicitous about him, before he could venture on his return to his lodgings. He begged me to meet him on the orchestra platform half an hour before the first grand rehearsal, to *examine* the conductor's stand. It then appeared that none of our stands satisfied his desires; the shape, style, supports, slides, lighting apparatus—everything that can be conceived in connexion with a wooden machine of the kind required altering, as did also the raised step, etc. Of course, Herr H., who was present as a member of the executive part of the Committee, took a note of all these wishes, in order to see them carried out as soon as possible. But nothing was done, for after Spontini had been presented to the whole of the performers, and received by them with cheers, and after he had conducted the overture, which was played very much to his satisfaction, he retired from the stand, and, giving me the conductor's stick, said he foresaw that, if he continued to conduct so numerous a body of performers, his strength would fail him; he then added some kind observations about his successor, and took his place between the two fair solo singers. He retained this position during the

performance also, only leaving it after every number that was received with enthusiasm, to bow his thanks to the public. The immense success which his master-work achieved on this occasion, evidently inspired and strengthened him; and though—to Onslow's great delight—he sat trembling and timid, like a woman, in the boat, in which, after the Festival, we were going down the Rhine on a pleasure-party to Rolandseck, he took his share with great satisfaction in all the entertainments provided for our distinguished visitors, and even went so far, at Castle Brühl, as to make a half-humorous dinner speech. On leaving, he gave me four of the medals struck in his honour at the Halle Musical Festival (in 1829), and adorned with a bust of himself; one, "*celle qui est distincte*" (electro-gilt), for myself; and three others of the ordinary description, "*au nom de son amitié, de sa gratitude, et de sa confraternité*," for the directors of the Festival, for the Musical Society (where the preparatory orchestral rehearsals had been held), and for the *Liedertafel*, which had created him an honorary member. The letter accompanying the medals commenced thus: "*O vous, très . . . Kapelmeister de la très fameuse historique ville de Cologne*," then indulged in all sorts of laudation of the management, and general execution, and concluded with: "Farewell, gentlemen, all of you, and do not forget your obedient, cordial, and *tout dévoué*, Spontini."

## V.

When I was summoned to Berlin, in 1849, to take Nicolai's place, I apprised Spontini of the fact. His answer, dated from the chateau de la Muette, was signed: "*Spontini, Comte de Sant' Andrea, directeur général de la musique, et premier maître de chapelle de Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse*." This was the last token I ever had of him while he was alive. In consequence of his continuing to grow deaf and deaf, he shortly afterwards left for the warmer climate of Italy, in which country he died, near his native Jesi, on the 14th January, 1851. Grief for what he had suffered had weakened him sooner than would otherwise have been the case with a man of so vigorous a constitution. No artist can fail to be painfully affected at losing an honourable position undeservedly, but how much more poignantly must the loss be felt by one who cannot conceal from himself the fact that it has been occasioned by his own fault. And yet I would not see Spontini unconditionally condemned. The foundation of all the differences, both open and concealed, which existed for years between him and his superior, was laid when, in 1820, the Royal Operahouse, in Berlin was presented with a *General Musik-Director* (Director General of Music), who was to exercise unrestricted authority over every thing relating to musical matters in the theatre.\* But the "sole and uniform management" which this was intended to bring about in operatic matters could not fail, *ipso facto*, of producing constant hitches between the Intendant-General and the Director General of Music, especially when the latter possessed so proud a disposition, and such eagerness for power as Spontini. Yet this proud imperious man—and his proud imperious spirit is something else in extenuation of his fault—was never self-dependent. He allowed himself to be led; frequently, and for his advantage, by his amiable and clever wife—but more often, to his injury, by friends of the house and appendices, in whose selection he was not sufficiently careful. To this must be added the fact that both he and his wife were ignorant of German, and thus it came to pass that, in 1841, he allowed himself to give utterance, in the *Zeitung für die Elegante Welt*, to the unhappy assertion that: "if, in the dispute between him and the Intendant, the decision was given against him (Spontini), the signature and the sacred word of two Prussian kings would be compromised." In consequence of the public scandal which this occasioned, Spontini was obliged to resign his position. Friedrich Wilhelm, however, revenged himself truly like a king; the guilty Director General of Music merely changed his place of residence; he retained all the remuneration to which he was entitled under his engagement, and was distinguished by gracious Cabinet Edicts and by the presentation of more orders. But it was precisely this which was the most deadly blow for him; an ungracious dismissal would have excited his spirit of defiance and kept up the elasticity of his mind—such magnanimous treatment awakened and fostered in it a feeling of regret, which never afterwards left him. I have already stated what extraordinary exertions Spontini made once more to be brought into personal communication with his Royal patron; but to prove with what feelings he also incidentally thought of this magnanimous sovereign, I will quote from his letter of thanks to me (Cologne, 25th May, 1847), the passage regarding the Halle Medal, with which, at the time it was presented to him, was combined, also, a doctor's diploma: "*le glorieux diplôme—au nom révére du bon Roi—de docteur en*

\* From the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung*.

† Which I have rendered in equivalently shattered English.—J. V. B.

\* "*Der in Allem, was sich auf das Musikalische des Theaters bezog, unumschränkte Herrschaft ausüben sollte*." "These words," says Herr Dorn, in a foot-note, "I have taken expressly from the *Berliner Tonkünstler-Lexicon*, by Ledebur." Such being the case, I have considered it advisable to give them in the original as well as in English.—J. V. B.



musique, à l'occasion du très éclatant festival, consacré à la célébration de ce grand monarque adoré." And in his last letter to me (12th October, 1849), he begs that I will produce his "Domine, salvum fac regem," in Berlin, and, if possible, "En présence de Sa Majesté le Roi, en l'honneur du quel je l'ai composée dans toute l'expansion de mon âme." Thus did Spontini inwardly grieve for and expiate the fault he committed in his wild passion.

On the 15th October, 1851 (the year in which the composer died), I at length saw the realization of something I had long ardently desired. I had the pleasure of being able to direct a very careful revival of his greatest work, *Olympia*,\* at the Royal Operahouse, Berlin. The composer's widow, who had come from Paris, and who was well-versed in art, exhausted herself in eulogistic expressions towards all concerned: Mesdames Köster, Wagner, Herren Pfister, Salomon, and Zschiesche. But for me she had prepared an especial surprise, which became, without her participation, even more surprising. With an account of what took place in connection with it, I will close the present sketches. Well, on the 25th April, 1858 (on the third Sunday after Easter), I had the pleasure of receiving a visit from Herr Gottheimer, *Kammergerichtsath*, who came in his capacity as executor of Herr Ezechiel, *Commerzienrath*, deceased. As such, he had brought the furniture of the deceased to the hammer, and, just as a mahogany desk had been knocked down to the highest bidder, a secret drawer was discovered in it. In the drawer, was a large roll of paper, sealed with a count's crest, and bearing the direction in M<sup>me</sup>. Spontini's hand: "*Monsieur Henri Dorn à Berlin*." Herr Gottheimer handed me, as the lawful proprietor, the roll. I opened it, and found inside Spontini's conducting stick, which—as we afterwards learned—M<sup>me</sup>. Spontini had sent to Herr Ezechiel for me, immediately after her return to Paris in 1851. But Herr Ezechiel who was an enthusiastic admirer of Spontini, formerly a regular visitor at his house, and his *chargé d'affaires*, was unable to part with the treasured memorial; and so it was not till seven years later that I received the recompense awarded me for *Olympia*. On the 23rd October, 1861, I conducted for the first time *Nurmahal*,† which was then revived, on which occasion, and in the presence of Madame Spontini, who had come to witness this performance, also, I used, in her honour, her late husband's *battuta* for conducting the overture. As I knew beforehand, my strength would not have allowed me to do more; for the long, thick, heavy ebony stick, with its podgy handle and tip of massive ivory, must, at the first flourishes, tire out the arm of anyone not accustomed to it. We may strive to obtain the armour of Achilles, without being able to wear it in the fight.

HEINRICH DORN.

### To Dr. Abraham Sadoke Silent.

DEAR SILENT,—Of one downy blusterer a whilome poet writ as affixed:—

"Jack Carnifex before the poor doth swell;  
Before the rich drops voice and syllable,  
And bleats a mild Jack Carney. Jack doth well."

Of another the same poetaster (whilome) writ as affixed:—

"Chawles says Jack bawls. Not to his betters, Chawles;  
So no man hath a right to say Jack bawls."

Both are good—the second is right good. Nevertheless, the name of the poet was Martial Stalk, who had access to my columns, and but now writ prosaically, as beneath:—

"To the uninitiated, whatever property a legal instrument may be intended to convey, there is one thing it rarely conveys; *i.e.*, its precise meaning. That idiot Jones, who always 'will have his joke,' terms the panniers in which his children ride on the family donkey, the '*Wicker of Bray*.'"

Perhaps now you will be able to understand the "occlusion of portals previously patulous"—more than ever imminent.

Punch.

[This may be fairly styled a Palimpsest (from *παλιν* and *ψαω*) made out of owl-articles. But why not a word about the Caxtonian idea of "Thorough-Bass" (*Musical World*, July 31—page 544)? According to Schenkius, Palimpsest hath another signification. Palindrome (*retrocurrere*) is a word, or sentence, which may be read backwards or forwards (better backwards), like the anagram of a certain contributor to the *Musical Queen's Messenger*, in want of a Lord Carrington, &c.—A. S. S.]

\* *Olympia* was produced at Berlin for the first time on the 14th May, 1821, and after that had not been performed since the 22nd June, 1834.

† *Nurmahal* was first produced at Berlin on the 27th May, 1822, and had not been performed since the 4th May, 1837.

### I Dip into Oblivion.

MY DEAR —,—I asked Signor Verdi if he would show me the correspondence he had with Her Majesty's Commissioners of the International Exhibition, and having kindly consented, this is what I can positively state:—The first letter Signor Verdi received is dated the 3rd July, 1861. By this letter he was invited by the said Commissioners to write a Triumphant March, with full orchestra. In answer to this letter Signor Verdi accepted the invitation. With another letter of the 11th July, Signor Verdi was acquainted by the Commissioners that Signor Costa was elected the director of the music, and that his desire was to have the music ready by the first of February. Signor Verdi replied that the music would have been sent in time for the proper rehearsals, and its execution, but that he could not fix the day, nor the epoch, because he was at that time writing an opera for St. Petersburg. Another letter of the 24th July, in reply to the above, says to Signor Verdi to send the music at his earliest convenience.

Signor Verdi having then returned from St. Petersburg in the month of March, 1862, he met Auber in Paris, who told him he had written and finished his triumphal march, with full orchestra, for the opening of the Exhibition. At this information Signor Verdi, not to come in contact with Auber, both writing the same thing, proposed to the Commissioners the change of his piece. This was the reply:—"There is no objection on the part of Her Majesty's Commissioners to the substitution of an overture for the march which you originally undertook to compose for the opening ceremony, but, at the same time, I am to request that you will suit your own convenience in the matter."

After this Signor Verdi decided to write a cantata, so much the more that Tamberlik kindly offered himself to sing it; and having informed the Commissioners of this resolution, eight days after, being the 22nd of March, Signor Verdi received the answer that the Commissioners could not accept his offer. During this elapse of time Signor Verdi had written the cantata, which was sent to London, and I was requested to offer it to the Commissioners; therefore I wrote on the 5th of April to the secretary, informing him that Signor Verdi's cantata for the opening of the Exhibition was at the disposal of Her Majesty's Commissioners, and I requested to know if they would like to have it or not. In this latter case, I also added that if the Commissioners wished to have the march, Signor Verdi will be in London himself in a fortnight, that is to say, on the 20th of April. Only on the 12th I received this answer, that there was no time for the requisite arrangements, and the Royal Commission declined the cantata and the march.

You now know precisely all what passed between the Royal Commissioners and Signor Verdi. I being a foreigner and an Italian cannot without indignation look upon this insult given to the first Italian composer of the present day, and the representative of the Italian art, and also of the Italian nation, Signor Verdi being also a distinguished member of the Italian Parliament. Put in comparison the reception Signor Verdi met in Russia, and everywhere, with that he found in England? I could write a long speech showing the disgraceful conduct of the Royal Commissioners towards Verdi, but the public has already expressed their opinion, and time will strengthen it.—I have the pleasure to be, dear Mr. —,— yours faithfully,

May 7th, 1862.

[No comment is necessary on the foregoing, ven from those whose profession is that of commentators.—A.S.S.]

### To Shirley Brooks, Esq.

DEAR SHIRLEY,—Women are making rapid strides in their efforts to rank with men. A few days ago two women in America fought a duel with clubs. This was a step in the right direction, but if women indulge in the duel, they should do it in a gentlemanlike way. A duel has taken place near Genoa between two nuns, who exchanged pistol shots, but no blood. I should be sorry if women were to hurt each other, but if this can be avoided there is no objection to their exchanging pistol shots. A German paper, reporting this duel, regrets that the expedient did not occur to Miss Saurin and Mrs. Starr, as it would have saved much valuable time. One thing, however, about this fighting of duels must make men uncomfortable. No doubt in a few years' time we shall be able to meet woman on equal terms, and knock her down, or shoot her, in a regularly and orderly way; but at present the "woman" movement is in its infancy. Suppose a man challenged by a woman, he will be called coward if he declines, and coward if he lifts a pistol against her—a serious difficulty. Woman must leave us alone until civilization is sufficiently advanced for us to shoot without compunction. As matters now stand, she can say to us, like the special constable in *Punch*, addressing the rough—"If I kill you it's nothing, but if you kill me, it's murder."—Yours (requesting an explanation),

A. S. Silent.

HAMBURG.—Herr Gottfried Hermanns of Lubeck, has been appointed director of the Bachverein, in place of Herr G. Armbrust, deceased.

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## BIRTH.

On July 24th, the wife of G. LANSLOWNE COTTELL, Esq., of a son.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ZAMIELS OWL.—When a party takes the name of another party's novel, and sticks, affixes, appends, deposits, applies, fastens that name to or on the outside of a waltz, it is well. But is it well that he should not send the other party a copy? Answer that. The application lies in the comprehension.

SERPENT.—"Serpent," touching Michael Angelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, dissents from an opinion that the frescoes on the ceiling are worthier "autotyping" than the *Last Judgment*, and supports the claim of the latter by the following from Kugler:—"If we consider the number of the figures, the boldness of the conception, the variety of movement and attitude, the drawing, the extraordinary and difficult foreshortenings, this work stands alone." Here our correspondent's quotation stops. Not so Kugler, who ends as follows:—"but in purity and majesty it does not equal the paintings on the ceiling." When an authority is quoted, we may surely call attention to the fact that it is in dis-favour of the quoter. So much for "Serpent."

SUBDEAN CRUST.—The Germans possess that to which perhaps no other nation can fairly lay claim—a musical literature. All branches—history, criticism, biography, science, romance; more correct, accurate, truth-seeking, reliable, if more wordy and obscure than we are accustomed to. In short, it is quite possible for musicians to have a strong literary turn, and to think of other things besides music.

HORACE MAYHEW.—*Pun* (Hindustanee)—a handful of cowries, according to Mr. Simcock House, is equivalent to twenty gundas. Five puns, or 400 cowries, constitute one anna, the sixteenth part of a rupee.

G. G.—*Ce que l'on appelle le style tant soit peu* TEA POT. *Accordé*. The sooner the concerto of "Beetle-Brows" is ready the better.

## NOTICE.

It is urgently requested that Advertisements may be sent not later than Thursday, otherwise they will be too late for insertion in the current number.

TO ADVERTISERS.—The Office of the MUSICAL WORLD is at Messrs. DUNCAN DAVISON & Co.'s, 244, Regent Street, corner of Little Argyll Street (First Floor). Advertisements received as late as Three o'clock P.M. on Thursdays, but not later. Payment on delivery.

## The Musical World.

LONDON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 1869.

## ACIS AND GALATEA.

ALL who care about the art of music owe Mr. Vining of the Princess's Theatre much thanks. He has brought out Handel's deathless pastoral after a fashion which leaves little to desire. We hope his reward is sure; and know that, if he get it in proportion to the demands made for what is classical now-a-days, he will have no reason to complain. In such cases, however, it often happens that managers find themselves sadly betrayed. There are a large number of people who make a great bother about what ought to be, and who love grumbling at what is. They are for ever conjuring up an ideal, and worshipping it in public places, that men may see what aspiring souls they have. But they do no more than this. Let somebody try to get rid of the "is" in favour of the "ought to be"; or to turn their fancy into a reality, and they

will look on without stirring a finger. We do not accuse these people of hypocrisy. No doubt their feelings are genuine enough; but it is one thing (and a very cheap one) to indulge in sentimental aspirations, quite another to set about their realization. A great deal has been said lately against English burlesque and Offenbachian opera. Dirges have been sung in lament of the decay of public taste, and the monopoly of our stage by things unworthy has called forth no end of well expressed disgust. The earnestness, if not the genuineness, of all this is now to be tested, and Mr. Vining furnishes the touchstone. No conditions could be fairer. *Acis and Galatea*, on the Princess's stage, possesses every requisite to charm both eye and ear. Will the clamourers for the classical, the protestors against Offenbach, the haters of burlesque and music-hall ditties, come forward and support it? If not, they should in common decency for ever after hold their peace.

But Mr. Vining's enterprise appeals to another class with almost equal force. The condition of English opera and the scarcity of English lyric artists are favourite themes. We are by no means sure that they do not constitute one of the grievances it is a pleasure to talk about, like some people's chronic ailments. The corpse of English opera is always being "waked" and the crooning over it never ceases. What wonder! The death of the thing is a disgrace, and submission to the event would be contemptible. Put it to our credit, therefore, that we howl over the remains, and, now and then, try to galvanize them into life again. All who are solicitous about the future of our national lyric stage must have watched the Crystal Palace experiment with interest, and rejoiced in its success. Not less will they now fix their regards upon the Princess's, where a genuine English opera, played, with one exception, by English artists, makes another appeal for support. No appeal could be stronger. The bare mention of *Acis and Galatea* suggests all that is charming in ancient story, and truthful in descriptive music. Upon neither story nor music need we dilate, though, as regards the latter, silence is hard. In these days of inflated bombast, one loves the grand repose and classic beauty of Handel's strains. It is like turning out of Madame Tussaud's saloons into the Grecian court of the Crystal Palace; getting away from paint and spangles to look upon the sculptor's marble. Healthy music is that of *Acis*, hearing which we breathe the pure air of art. Its performance we can honestly praise. Miss Blanche Cole's *Galatea*, for example, is an impersonation of merit, and one which excites hope about her future. The young lady has, for a comparative novice, strong dramatic feeling, always, however, kept within the bounds of propriety. Moreover, she sings with taste and skill, giving admirable expression to all her music. Hardly anything could be better than her rendering on Monday night of the pathetic lament, "Must I my *Acis*," while generally she earned the applause unstintingly given. The *Acis* of Mr. Vernon Rigby is also effective; that he sings the music carefully and well, needs no assurance. For ourselves, however, we are surprised at his stage-efficiency. We have had a good lyric artist among us without knowing it. Mr. Rigby's greatest success is, as might be expected, in "Love sounds the alarm," an air rarely better delivered than by him. Mr. Montem Smith, as *Damon*, has only two songs, but each is a gem, and to each he does every justice. "Would you gain the tender creature" is especially well sung by this intelligent artist, whose expressive delivery of its beautiful phrases, could not easily be surpassed. Herr Formes makes a comic character of Polyphemus, a proceeding not to our taste. It must be granted, however, that the character is consistent throughout; and, from the actor's point of view, well rendered. Even in his singing, Herr Formes approaches the burlesque. The famous love ditty, for



example, is absolutely funny. It cannot be questioned that the German basso makes his giant a strongly-marked individuality. With hardly an exception, the choruses go well—no small result, looking at the difficulty of some among them; while the stage groupings and scenery are charmingly effective. To add to the completeness of this revival, there is a capital orchestra, with the veteran J. L. Hatton at its head. In short, nothing is left undone at the Princess's that ought to be done.

About the first scene (music by Mr. T. Cooke), we may have something to say next week. All we can say now is that it might be spared. T. Cooke and Handel do not consort over well.

THADDEUS EGG.

#### CRYSTAL PALACE CONCERTS.

The annual "Summer Concerts" of the Crystal Palace—like those in the winter and spring, chiefly devoted to music on its own account, instead of to music on account of the style and manner of its performance—have never been carried on with greater spirit or with greater success than now. In former years the vogue of these concerts mainly depended upon singers from the two Italian Operas; but unable to conclude a satisfactory arrangement with Messrs. Gye and Mapleson, the directors have been compelled to seek for attraction elsewhere; and that they were able to find it may be gathered from the fact that their concerts have invariably been well attended. Both vocal and instrumental artists were at hand worthy to uphold the musical reputation of the Crystal Palace and to help Mr. Manns, the zealous and excellent conductor, in constructing programme after programme of increasing variety and interest. An orchestra materially fortified in a numerical and it is but just to add in an efficient sense has equally put it in his power to enrich his selections with operatic overtures; while the Crystal Palace Choir has contributed part-songs and choruses, for the most part so effectively as to afford general satisfaction. Thus the "Summer Concerts" have prospered as much this year as in previous years, when the Italian "stars" used regularly to lend their services, and when, it may be imagined, the expenses must have been very considerably heavier.

The concert on Saturday afternoon was a "special" entertainment. The engagement of Mdlle. Christine Nilsson, the most popular singer of the hour, having expired with the Royal Italian Opera season of 1869, she was at liberty to make terms with the authorities of the Crystal Palace, and the "Eighth Summer Concert" was in a great measure organized with a view to the exhibition of her powers. A more complete success could hardly have been obtained. Mdlle. Nilsson was set down for three pieces—two sacred and one secular—each of which she sang to the entire gratification and delight of one of the most crowded audiences of the year. Her reception was enthusiastic. How admirably Mdlle. Nilsson could sing sacred music had already been proved on various occasions, in London and elsewhere, and was only the more convincingly established now. The truth is that she is a genuine artist, with a genuine claim upon public sympathy, the very rarest natural endowments being in her person combined with a degree of cultivation almost as rare; and, where the means exist, intelligence, accompanied by industry, it need scarcely be said, can effect wonders. Mdlle. Nilsson has made no child's play of her vocation, but, the rather, a serious and well-directed study; and when, some two months ago, at her first concert in St. James's Hall, she came forward in sacred music (the first two parts of Haydn's *Creation*) she had taken quite as much into consideration her own glory as the wishes of a large section of the public disinclined to attend theatrical performances in a theatre, but not the less desirous of hearing theatrical singers of eminence in a concert-room. A more spirited and brilliant rendering of Handel's "Let the bright Seraphim" (*Samson*) than that of Mdlle. Nilsson on Saturday has seldom been heard; and this notwithstanding that the trumpeter of trumpeters, Mr. C. Harper, being ill, the *obbligato* part for the trumpet was, perforce, executed upon the cornet—a-pistons by a member of the famous Crystal Palace band, who did the very best that could possibly be done under the circumstances. Haydn's more quiet and melodious air, "With verdure clad," was another legitimate triumph. For beauty of vocal tone, finished phrasing, and truth of expression, Mdlle. Nilsson's delivery of this air has not often been equalled, still less often surpassed. About the famous scene of the madness from *Lucia di Lammermoor* (her secular contribution on Saturday), when we have said she gave it from end to end as forcibly, expressively, and poetically as ever, another word will not be expected—unless it be to record how well she was supported in the flute *obbligato* accompaniment by Mr. Wells—also of the Crystal Palace. Mdlle. Nilsson had been already unanimously called back at the termination of each of her sacred songs; but her reception after the

scene di bravura of Donizetti was something out of the common—nothing more, however, than was amply merited by one of the most eloquent displays of dramatic singing that have marked our time.

The other vocal performers were Mr. Vernon Rigby, who was loudly applauded for his vigorous and pointed declamation in "Sound an alarm;" Mdlle. Sinico, who in "Ernani involami" (Verdi) sang her very best, and created an impression which culminated in a general "recall;" M. Urlo, who has appeared on several occasions at the "Summer Concerts," where, to judge by the applause bestowed upon his energetic delivery of an air from *Rigoletto*, and the "Cujus animam" from Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, he seems to have found favour; Signor Foli, who, as usual, imparted due weight and dignity to "Qui sdegno"—Sarasstro's second air in *Il Flauto Magico*; and Mdlle. Hélène D'Alton, a young lady with a very pleasing contralto voice, who sang the touchingly devotional air, "O Lord, Thou hast searched me out," from Professor W. Sterndale Bennett's *Woman of Samaria*, and the pretty romance, "Gentle Troubadour," from Vincent Wallace's *Lurline*, extremely well—the first (and most trying) especially. The chorus, on this exceptional occasion some 2,000 strong, consisting of the metropolitan contingent of the Handel Festival Choir, was heard to eminent advantage in the prayer from *Masaniello* (Act 3); "See the conquering hero comes" (*Judas Maccabæus*); Mendelssohn's exquisite part-song, "O Hills and Vales;" and the prayer from Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto*. Mr. James M. Wehli, the pianist, who has hitherto particularly shone as a showy player of showy fantasias, chiefly of his own composition, came boldly forward with Mendelssohn's *Rondo Brillante* (or *Capriccio Brillante*, as it was originally entitled) in B minor; and the orchestra gave the overtures to Auber's *Masaniello* and Mendelssohn's *Athaliah* superbly. The concert was altogether one of the best of the summer series. On Wednesday (commencing at 5 p.m.) the first of a series of "Ballad Concerts," in which Mdlle. Sinico, Misses Banks and Edith Wynne, Signor Foli, and Mr. Sims Reeves, was given. No school of art is beneath the attention of those veritable eclectics, the directors of the Crystal Palace music. So much the better for the musical public at large.

#### CONCERTS VARIOUS.

MDLLE. CONSTANCE SKIWA, the pianist from Vienna, who made so favourable an impression at the Saturday Crystal Palace and other concerts, gave an evening concert on Wednesday last at the residence of J. Siley, Esq., Canonbury Place, which was very well and fashionably attended. The young lady took part in Schubert's trio in E flat, Op. 109, with Mr. Chandeau Lane, violin, and Monsieur Albert, violoncello, and played a variety of solos by Chopin, Schumann, Wieniawski, and Handel, for all of which she received much applause, being several times recalled. The other artists who afforded her valuable assistance were Mdlle. Liebhart, Miss Alice May (the new contralto), Miss Helen Barron, Mr. Suchet Champion, and Signor Caravoglia. Mdlle. Liebhart was encored in G. B. Allen's "Little bird so sweetly singing," when she gave the same composer's "Beware!" which she sings with infinite archness. She also sang "Home, sweet Home," and joined Miss Alice May in a new duet, "Memory." This last-named possesses a fresh voice of considerable power, which she has turned to advantage. Her songs were "Beryl," by Virginia Gabriel, set to some very graceful verses by Mr. George Metzler; and Allen's "Twas long, long since in the Spring-time," which always produces an effect when well delivered. Miss Helen Barron sang Sullivan's "Will he come?" and Ganz's "Forget me not;" Signor Caravoglia, "The Village Blacksmith," and "Largo al factotum," being encored in which last he substituted "Già la luna;" Mr. Sachet Champion sang Blumenthal's "Evening Song," and a song of his own, "Mignonnette" (encored); Monsieur Albert and Mr. Chandeau Lane played solos on their respective instruments; and the concert was altogether a success. Mr. Austin conducted.

THE professional students of the London Academy of Music gave their second public concert in St. George's Hall on the 23rd ult., under the direction of Herr Ganz. The programme was long and varied, and among the successes of the *matinée* were Dusek's violin and pianoforte sonata in B flat, well played by Miss Marie Polak and Herr Sternberg (artist); Schira's "Tamai," sung by Miss Matilda Scott; Thalberg's "La Straniera," played by Miss W. Gray; and a *morceau brillante* (Talexy), in which a very young lady, Miss Hutchinson, greatly distinguished herself. All the performers just named were recalled by an appreciative audience.

RAIN.—On the 11th ult., the four brothers Lachner held their annual family meeting in this, their native, place. They were Theodor, court organist at Munich; Franz, Director General of Music, at the same capital; Ignatius, conductor at Frankfort-on-the-Maine; and Vincenz, conductor at Mannheim. It is fifty years since one of their brothers died.

## ACIS AND GALATEA AT THE PRINCESS'S.

From the time when Mr. Charles Kean commenced his brilliant management of this theatre the stage has been in high repute for the magnificence of its decorations. That repute has been well maintained to the present day; but for some years past, while the stage has been normally gorgeous, the "auditorium" (as we are now instructed to call it) has looked extremely dismal and dull. However, a reform has been effected where it was most wanted, and when the public who assembled on the re-opening of this theatre for the season on Monday last saw how the spirit of renovation, embodied in Mr. James McIntosh, had been at work, a buzz of admiration went round. The dark panels of the boxes, which in their best days looked heavy, had become white, and were richly decorated with golden sculptures, while three sunlights, with crystal lustres, diffused their rays. The Royal box, with massive curtains of crimson velvet, contrasted perhaps too strongly with the light character which belongs to the house, but it was gorgeous in the extreme. A new drop-curtain by the Messrs. Teibin, beautifully representing satin drapery, completed the picture.

The main attraction of the evening was Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, revived after the precedent afforded at Drury Lane in 1842. Playgoers who are sufficiently old to remember that year are aware that the revival of the celebrated "Serenata" by Mr. Macready, in the early part of his direction of Drury Lane, was one of the most perfect of that great manager's achievements. In those days, a combination of scenic magnificence with perfect classical or historical propriety was a comparative novelty, and people were justly amazed when they saw John Gay's poem decorated as some master of the pencil might have decorated the Idylls of Theocritus. The late Mr. Clarkson Stanfield was then in his glory, and never in his works for the stage had he distinguished himself more than in *Acis and Galatea*. Even the mechanical appliances were new. Many a ship had been tossed on a sea of canvas; but that precise sea that gently rippled on the sands in 1842 was unlike all that had been seen before, and when people had sufficiently admired the novel effect they began to wonder how it had been brought about. Then the groups—how massive, how admirably arranged, how classical they were! The whole thing can now be looked back upon as a bright Arcadian dream; for Arcadia is a wide region, comprising even Sicily, when contemplated from a pastoral point of view.

Mr. George Vining has been fortunate enough to obtain from the son of Mr. Stanfield the sketches made by his inimitable father for Mr. Macready's scenery; and therefore the work as now represented at the Princess's is a *fac-simile* of that produced at Drury Lane, the artist employed being Mr. F. Lloyds, who has so often distinguished himself in Oxford Street. Even the occasional drop-scene, or "frontispiece," including copies of Annibal Caracci's "Galatea rising from the Sea," and "Flight of Acis and Galatea," and Nicolas Poussin's "Polyphemus on the Rock," has been reproduced—this particular picture being the work (of course, after Stanfield) of Mr. William Callcott. The size of Drury Lane is incapable alone of imitation at the Princess's, and hence certain among the audience who have completed their tenth lustre may possibly feel like those aged Jews who witnessed the building of the new Temple with the remembrance of the old one fresh in their minds. But to all others the work presented by Mr. George Vining will appear absolutely perfect. He gives an entertainment which may fairly be termed "classical," whether we interpret that word in reference to Music or in reference to Greek.

While a series of exquisitely beautiful pictures is presented, Handel is not neglected; and it is not often that a more creditable musical performance is seen than in the *Acis and Galatea* at the Princess's Theatre. Miss Blanche Cole has an extremely sympathetic voice, and sings with such genuine artistic feeling that there is no doubt her performance of Galatea will mark an epoch in her progress. At Drury Lane Acis was treated as a contralto, and sung by Miss P. Horton. At the Princess's becoming a tenor, in accordance with Handel's design, he is assigned to Mr. Vernon Rigby, who sustains the part with great spirit, and gains an unanimous encore by the ever-stirring song, "Love sounds the alarm." Mr. Montem Smith, as Damon, is equally fortunate with the air, "Would you gain the tender creature." How ought the character of Polyphemus to be represented in a dramatic performance of Handel's *Serenata, Acis and Galatea*? This is a question that must occur to every one who sees the harmony of a beautiful picture destroyed by the appearance of a figure that resembles more than anything else the ludicrous giant of a Christmas pantomime. The figure strikes terror into all the *dramatis personæ*, but it is simply ridiculous in the eyes of the audience. It is scarcely possible to make a giant otherwise than as an ill-proportioned object on the stage, unless the noted Chinese Chang be engaged by the manager, and, unfortunately, Chang cannot sing. You may heighten the soles of your giant's buskins, or you may make the actor's face reach the pit of an artificial stomach surmounted by an artificial head and chest. Tallness will thus be obtained, but proportion will be sacrificed, and you will not even reach a sublime monstrosity

such as might be supposed to exist in the heroic age of Greece. The giant will still look as if he had been constructed to celebrate the rites of the 5th of November, and he will not inspire a single person with terror, save perhaps some unfortunate child who takes him for the traditional "bogy." There is, indeed, one way of preserving proportion when a giant is put upon the stage, and that (*vide* F. A. Paley's *Æschylus*) is supposed to have been adopted at the performance of *Prometheus Vincit*, in which tragedy, as we learn from the text, the dimensions of the sublime sufferer are supposed to be colossal. Prometheus, it would seem, was represented by a huge wooden figure, behind which the words assigned to him were spoken by an actor, who, when his Promethean work came to a pause, advanced to the front and personated some other character. An expedient like this was once adopted in a Christmas pantomime on the subject of *Hop o' my Thumb*. But the giant so contrived is a fixture—a bound Prometheus, and could not accommodate himself to the action of *Acis and Galatea*. Granted that Polyphemus cannot help being ridiculous, we may fairly ask ourselves whether he was ever otherwise according to antique notions. He was terrible enough to the mythic beings, who feared to fall within his clutches; but was he ever intended to inspire awe in those who heard or read his story? The tale of his misfortune, as related in the *Odyssey*, is decidedly "funny." Ulysses gives himself the name *Ōrys*; and the "monstrum informe, ingens," shouting aloud that he has been bereft of sight by Mr. Nobody, is unable to make his friends understand his calamity. He is not only a monster but a lubber, the destined butt for the practical jokes of heroes. Theocritus, in the eleventh Idyll, would bestow upon him all the sympathy he has at command, but still the clumsy simplicity of his gallantry causes the smile rather than the tear, and the Idyll is evidently comic. Ovid (*Metam.* xiii.), from whom alone, by the way, we derive the story of Acis, improves the manners of the Cyclops at the expense of his simplicity, making him say half-a-dozen pretty phrases where Theocritus allowed him a single rough compliment. Still, the silken purse is not to be made out of the unsuitable material. Herr Formes as Polyphemus at the Princess's is pre-eminently unwieldy and ridiculous. His love is awkward, and his rage is grotesque. But so were the love and rage of the Cyclops from time immemorial, and there is nothing in the words of the "Serenata" to show that John Gay deviated an inch from old notions.

The discipline of the chorus could scarcely be excelled, the precision of the voices and the statuesque disposition of the figures rendering "Wretched lovers" one of the most effective pieces of the evening. The orchestra is conducted by the veteran musician, Mr. J. L. Hatton.

One improvement may be counselled, though it would be a departure from the Drury Lane precedent, and that is the omission of the music composed by the late Mr. T. Cooke for the introductory scene. People are more learned in such matters than they were in 1842, and can scarcely fail to mark the utter discrepancy between the modern frivolity and the grand emanations of the old master. The "rolling sea" must, of course, be preserved, but could not this be shown without the ballet, which is not worth much, during the performance of the overture?

## THE WORCESTER FESTIVAL.

The Triennial Musical Festival will be held on September 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th. On the first day (Tuesday) *Elijah* will be given; on Wednesday, Mr. Sullivan's *Prodigal Son*, and a selection from *Judas Maccabæus*; on Thursday, the *Solemn Mass* of Rossini, and Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*; and on Friday the *Messiah*.

On Tuesday evening Mr. J. F. Barnett's *Ancient Mariner*, will be performed, with Mdlle. Tietjens, Madame Patey, Mr. Vernon Rigby, and Mr. Lewis Thomas, as solo singers. The second part includes a selection from Rossini, Donizetti, Schubert, F. David, Blumenthal, &c., with Mesdames Lemmens-Sherrington, Tietjens, and Trebelli-Bettini, Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. Santley, and Signor Bettini, as principal vocalists. On Wednesday evening, Mendelssohn's *First Walpurgis Night*, a selection from Weber's *Oberon*, the overture to Sullivan's *Sapphire Necklace*, and a composition entitled *Hommage à Rossini* are to be given. The third and last evening programme is made up of selections from Mozart's *Il Flauto Magico*, including the overture; and from the works of Meyerbeer, Donizetti, Rossini, Purcell, Beethoven, Verdi, Bellini, Randegger, &c. The band and chorus will number nearly 350 performers. The organ (electric) is by Bryceson & Co.

The engagements with vocalists and instrumentalists are completed; the programmes are in an advanced stage of preparation; and the honorary secretary is hard at work concluding the final arrangements. The whole of the choir, up to King John's tomb, will be available for the purposes of the Festival. This concession is universally appreciated. After the 19th inst. service is to be held in the Lady Chapel. The local choir is working indefatigably at the *Messe Solennelle* and the first part of Mr. Arthur Sullivan's new cantata, of which great things are predicated.

## SIMS REEVES AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE BALLAD CONCERTS.

(From the "Daily News," Aug. 5).

A prominent attraction of the day was the singing of Mr. Sims Reeves, for whom, however, an apology was made, printed notices stating that he was so hoarse as to be "absolutely prevented from singing 'The Death of Nelson.'" The great tenor was warmly welcomed on his first appearance on the platform, when he gave Bishop's recitative and air, "The Pilgrim of Love," with that splendid declamation in the first, and that refinement of expression in the second, by which he has long made this, and many other and better pieces, peculiarly his own. But little, if any, trace of indisposition was observable here, or in his subsequent performances—the singer's respect for himself, his art, and his public, probably rendering him somewhat over anxious in cases of slight ailment. While murmuring about cases of disappointment, the public should reflect that Mr. Reeves is a loser by the non-fulfilment of an engagement; and should, moreover, remember that although he may occasionally over-estimate the temporary disqualification of a very susceptible throat, the consequence has been that he has never yet risked a performance unworthy his high reputation, or their great anticipations. Certainly, his singing yesterday will bear comparison, in all the best qualities of style, phrasing, and enunciation, with that of any past occasion, or of any known singer. The next appearance of Mr. Reeves was with Signor Foli, in the duet, "All's Well," which was so admirably given by both as to draw forth the loudest applause and a recall, followed by a renewed demonstration, which continued for some time, till the secretary of the Crystal Palace (Mr. George Grove) came forward and stated that Mr. Reeves' cold was such that he begged to be exempted from the encore, and he would, if that indulgence were accorded to him, sing "The Death of Nelson." This produced loud tokens of approval, and accordingly the song was given, in its proper place, and with that splendid declamation and impressive style which impart to it an effect beyond the intrinsic importance of the music.

## PROVINCIAL.

BRIDLINGTON QUAY.—A correspondent writes from this sea-side resort as follows:—

"The visitors and inhabitants of this beautiful watering-place have enjoyed a rich musical treat owing to the visit of Dr. Spark, organist of the Town Hall, Leeds, &c., accompanied by Miss Amy Empsall, soprano; Miss Annie Anyon, contralto; and Mr. Dodds, bass, also of Leeds. Dr. Spark gave three concerts in the Victoria Rooms, the first (July 19th) consisting of Scotch and Irish music; the second (July 21st), miscellaneous and classical; and the third (July 23rd), English ballads, duets, &c. The entertainments were patronized by the visitors as well as by the most distinguished families of the neighbourhood, and presented music of a better class than that which is generally heard in this locality. We cannot speak in too warm terms of the singing of the ladies, who, we believe, are destined to a higher place than that which they have already attained. Indeed we cannot but think that Miss Anyon's reputation (as a singer of ballads especially), which has hitherto been local, will at no distant day become general. Mr. Dodds has a rich and powerful voice which he controls with skill. Some of his songs were heard with admiration. The playing of Dr. Spark was all that could be wished. On several Sundays the congregations of the old Priory Church, at Bridlington, were gratified with Dr. Spark's brilliant playing while conducting the musical services.

"On Tuesday"—says the *Malvern Advertiser*—"Herr Heinemeier gave a second entertainment at the Link, the room being Miss Greaves' School-room, lent for the occasion. The company, which was select, was delighted by Herr Heinemeier's performances on the violoncello. This gentleman is also a good violinist and flautist. Among his songs, that of 'The Discontented Husband' is always a favourite, and not the less so that it is the professor's own composition."

GREAT MALVERN.—The following is condensed from a local paper:—

"The annual festival of the associated choir of the Malvern district of the Church Choral Association for the Archdeaconry of Worcester, took place at the Priory Church. The weather was fine, the attendance of chorists and the general public considerable, the singing on the whole satisfactory. The following is a list of the choirs present, with the number of each:—The Priory,

27; Trinity, 22; Upton, 40; Severn Stoke, 16; West Malvern, 12; Malvern Wells, 14; Malvern Link, 18—making in all a total of 149. Mathon, though within the district, was not represented. The anthem and hymns were the same as those sung at recent festivals at Pershore, Evesham, and Kidderminster. The service was intoned by the Rev. R. Cattley, minor canon of Worcester Cathedral, the Lessons were read by the Rev. G. Fisk, LL.B., vicar of Great Malvern, who also preached the sermon, selecting as his text, 1 Corinthians, xiv. 15. The anthem and hymns were creditably rendered. Mr. Millward, choirmaster, conducted. Mr. W. Haynes accompanied on the organ with his accustomed ability. After service the choirs were entertained at dinner, the Rev. the Vicar taking the chair. Several addresses were given, and Mr. Roberts, a clergyman from Upton, who had only recently come into the neighbourhood, but who brought the largest choir to the festival, said:—From what he had seen that day he believed there was a very earnest work going on amongst them. Perhaps no development in the Church of the present day was so important and so thorough-going as the musical. The laity stood side by side with the clergy, and their assistance was most valuable. The work of that day must be considered as only commenced, and the lessons they had learned should be kept up and bettered. The Church of England would take that position in her services which she held 300 years ago, and it was hoped she would again occupy."

## FERDINAND HILLER.

(From our Own Correspondent.)

Dr. F. Hiller has been invited by the Concert Society of Petersburg, under the immediate patronage of the Grand Duchess Hélène, to conduct four concerts next winter. The direction of the Conservatoire of Cologne having granted to Dr. Hiller a prolongation of his usual *congé*, he has been enabled to accept this very brilliant as well as honorable engagement. The members of the celebrated Academy of Painting of Düsseldorf, headed by the great master, Bendmann, have just sent a letter to Dr. Hiller, thanking him for having yielded to the prayers of his friends, as well as of the friends of art, in remaining at his post at Cologne, to continue his work of propagating a taste for good music all over the Rhine.

SALVATORE SAVERIO DI BALDASSARE.

Cologne, 1st August, 1869.

## POETICAL VIEW OF A PLAIN SYMPHONY.

One of the most interesting features of the programme was the new symphony of Schubert's in C, No. 6, composed in 1818. It was performed for the first time in its complete form on this occasion. It opens with an *adagio* and *allegro*, somewhat in the manner of Haydn, or rather in the style prevalent when the composition was written, most of the phrases employed being the common property of all musicians of the period. The *allegro* is very lively and brilliant, as gay as the "Italian" symphony of Mendelssohn; the prevailing subject beautifully worked out in ingenious scoring; it is full of lovely melody and sunshine effects; indeed the whole symphony is like a spring day, an idea which may not inaptly be fitted to the work. The *andante* has a soft, delicious melody—loving, yet tender, like the accents of pure, true love; and the *scherzo* conveys the idea of a joyous meeting of youths and maidens on the village green to enjoy an innocent holiday. The first few phrases, given by the fiddles, lead up to a passage like a country dance, accompanied by quaint and unsophisticated tonic and dominant harmonies. All seems light, and life, and joy, when there is an interruption of a few grave passages, as though the elders had made their appearance to warn the holiday-makers that the sun was going down, the curfew was about to toll, and that it was time to cease; there are a few notes given by the horns and trombones, softly, which convey the idea of the tolling bell. The youth seem to plead for one dance more, with which entreaty is mixed the remonstrances of the parents, gradually getting weaker, and, finally, the original lively subject bursts in as though the elders, remembering their own youth, had yielded to the desire of the young ones, and the dance is concluded. It is a most lovely symphony, in parts almost too dreamy to be like mortal music; we could hear it again and again, and not tire, only wondering why it is that such delicious and masterly music could have lain unknown and unheard for so long a period.—*Morning Post*.

MAYENCE.—An operatic skit, by Herr Britong, entitled *Die Meister-singer, oder das Judenthum in der Musik*, has been produced with great success.

LEIPSIC.—M. Ambrose Thomas's *Mignon* has been produced with moderate success.—On the 22nd July, the firm of Breitkopf and Härtel celebrated with due rejoicings the completion of its five thousandth piano.

THE Marquis and Marquise de Caux left Paris on Tuesday, for Hom-bourg, where Madame sings for fourteen nights. After two performances at Baden, she returns to Paris, remains there during October, and finishes the year in St. Petersburg.



## W A I F S .

Madame Arabella Goddard has gone to St. Moritz, in Switzerland. She will resume her pianoforte recitals in the country early in the autumn.

Mdlle. Christine Nilsson left London on Monday evening. She returns in the second week of September. It is reported that her tour engagement with Mr. George Wood will terminate with four oratorio performances at Exeter Hall.

Madame Carlotta Patti is staying at Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Sig. Tombesi is engaged for next winter at the Hague and Amsterdam.

Madame Demeric-Lablache has signed an engagement for the Italian Opera, Lisbon.

Madame Marie Cabel is in temporary retirement, owing to an attack of rheumatism in the arm.

Verdi is engaged upon a comic opera, of which the libretto has been supplied by M. Victorien Sardou.

Herr Hans Bülow is reported to be leaving Munich for the purpose of going into retirement at Wiesbaden.

M. Faure reappears at the Grand Opéra, as Tell, in Rossini's masterpiece, which is to be brought out with much splendour.

Herr Wachtel, famous for his *Postillon de Longjumeau* and his chest C, is going to take those properties to New York on trial.

M. Ambroise Thomas replaces Rossini on the committee for erecting a statue to Guido d'Arezzo, the inventor of musical notation.

The Commemorative Anniversary of St. Andrew's College, Bradfield, was celebrated on Thursday last. A concert was given by the boys.

Among the audience witnessing the first performance of *Patrie*, in Brussels, were the Duc d'Aumale, the Vicomte de la Guéronnière, and M. Henri Rochefort.

Miss Burdett Coutts has presented Mr. Fred Godfrey, bandmaster of the Coldstream Guards, with an ivory baton, mounted in gold, in commemoration of the opening of the Columbia Market.

*L'Europe Artiste* says that the American impresario who engaged Mdlle. Nilsson for a tour in the United States has backed out, finding the terms too onerous. This story will serve for want of a better.

"We have no patience with Offenbach"—exclaims Mr. *Punch*.—"In the full tide of his deserved success 'he has determined,' so says a musical journal, 'to throw up his pen.' Depend upon it, if he does, he'll catch it."

The following delightful *non sequitur* is taken from an American contemporary:—"Dissension being rife on the musical pitch, Mr. Gore Ouseley has written a treatise *On Counterpoint Canon and Fugue on Cherubini's System*."

"De Retz," of the *Ménestrel*, says that, on the night of her benefit Mdlle. Nilsson supped with Lady Emily Peel, in whose carriage she was conveyed from the theatre attended by more than twenty other equipages;—"un cortège royal."

The old music-hall at Sheffield is now in course of demolition, preparatory to commencing the new structure, which will be one of the largest and most complete in the kingdom, the total cost, including an organ, is estimated at £15,000.

The new Operahouse in Vienna was closed on the 16th ult., and it will re-open on the 1st of September. The theatre An der Wien has been taken by Mdlle. Marie Geistinger, a great favourite, who will bring out *Le Petit Faust* this month.

Miss Helene D'Alton, who made so excellent a *début* as a contralto singer at the Crystal Palace "Christine Nilsson" Concert on Saturday, is a grandchild of the late Mr. Dan Corbett, of Cork, who was well known as an amateur Irish vocalist and performer in the "Beautiful City."

In a recent account of "international pigeon shooting" (!) a reporter states that the Prince of Wales looked well, and "evidently enjoyed the skilful and harmless pastime." All that we question in this statement is the applicability of the epithet "harmless" to a pastime in which 242 birds out of 353 were killed. Even among the 111 who got away there must have been many who had reason to consider that, in regard to themselves, the proceedings had not been altogether "harmless."

Negotiations are said to have been opened, both with Madame Adeline Patti, and with Mdlle. Christine Nilsson, for a long series of performances in America. The former is engaged for fourteen performances at Hombourg, to sing Tuesdays and Saturdays, and not to appear twice in the same opera.

Rossini's *Messe Solennelle* was performed, for the first time in Canada at Montreal, on July 1st, under the direction of Mr. A. J. Boucher. The artists were Mesdames Petipas (*prima donna*), A. J. Boucher (soprano), MM. Guénette, Payette, Valois (tenors), F. N. Lamothe, F. A. Lavoie (basses), O. Pelletier (organist), and J. A. Fowler (pianist).

The new Operahouse in Paris is burnishing itself up for the *fêtes*. Statues in white marble have taken their places on the *rez-de-chaussée*, statues in bronze have mounted the roof; both species are evidently acquainted with no other dress-makers than those accustomed to make for Eve. They appear in costumes peculiarly adapted to the present season.—*Continental Gazette*.

*Watson's Art Journal* says:—"The great manager, Max Strakosch, who produced Rossini's *Messe Solennelle* in a style so magnificently small that it literally died of inanition, has gone to Europe to bring out some tremendous prodigy to 'do' this unhappy country with. He left great reports behind to soothe the public grief at his absence, but it is possible that said reports may prove only a sort of pop-gun detonation to enliven the public spirit, and keep his memory green. So we await further confirmation."

Letters from Munich inform us that Madame Vogel has received a handsome diamond bracelet from the King for the manner in which she performed the character of the heroine in Herr Wagner's opera, *Tristan und Isolde*. Some apprehension having been expressed by the lady that she ran a pretty good chance of injuring her voice, if not of losing it altogether, if she sang the part often, she received an assurance from the Royal Wagnerite that, in case such a (by no means improbable) thing did happen, she should receive as indemnification a sum of 25,000 florins from the King's privy purse.

From a notice in a theatrical paper it appears that managers of music-halls are given to a fraud as bad as the sanding of sugar by grocers, or the use of false-bottomed tankards by innkeepers. A troop of female acrobats, after reciting the places in which they have triumphed, add the following:—

"N.B.—Grown women, not children, or boys ! ! !"

We are surprised neither for the italics nor the marks of surprise which conclude this declaration. It is a reflection upon managers who exhibit little girls instead of women, while the hint to patrons that male performers are palmed off for acrobats of the other sex ought to render them suspicious.

Mdlle. Lina R—, a young actress, of course beautiful, had turned the heads of numberless officers in that garrison. As a rule, soldiers are more plentifully supplied with courage than money. An officer managed to ruin himself and one of his comrades, who endorsed his bill, for his love chase. Finding himself unable to meet his engagements he attempted suicide, and was successful; his friend followed suit, but did not succeed. A brother officer put the body into a public carriage, and drove to the house of the actress—where Mdlle. Lina was surrounded with admirers. She was so much struck with the sight of the bleeding body of her lover that she was attacked with convulsions. On recovery, she left the town where she had been the cause of so much unhappiness, and shortly afterwards died of grief.

Tenors are so scarce now-a-days that we (*Athenæum*) watch all *débuts* with interest. There is not much to be hoped for, however, from M. Delabranche, who appeared a few days ago at the Grand Opéra in *Les Huguenots*. A pupil of M. Duprez, he made his first *début*, two or three years ago, in the same theatre, but without success. Since then he has gained a reputation in Marseilles and Lyons, and has been thereby emboldened again to try his fortune on the Parisian stage. But he is, as yet, far too uncultivated to do justice to the character of Raoul, the most difficult, looking at the wide range of needful qualifications, to be found in the tenor *répertoire*. Paris is just now as uneventful as London in music. The revival of *Vert-Vert* at the Opéra Comique, and the above-mentioned *début* at the Académie de Musique, are the only notes of the week.

Some statistics recently published at Berlin afford indications of the revival of the national drama within the last twenty years. For a long period Scribe and his imitators held almost undisputed possession of the German stage, which, as is even now the case with our own, was mainly devoted to the performance of translations and adaptations from the French. Of late years, however, a change has been effected. Between 1851 and 1861 not less than 150 new plays were performed at the Theatre Royal, Berlin, out of which only twenty farces are traceable to French sources; and last year 300 comedies and vaudevilles were sent to compete for the annual prize. The national party, ascribing this revival to the progress of liberal institutions, and consequent development of national spirit, lose sight of the fact that Goethe and Schiller flourished during a period of despotism and subservency.

To those who have devoted their energies to the removal of "Organ Grinders" from the neighbourhood of their residences, the new form of musical nuisance will offer a field for further employment when Count Arrivabene's Act, preventing the expatriation of young Italians, is really enforced. The pest alluded to consists in the performance of so-called musicians in second and third class carriages of the Metropolitan railways. These gentlemen, sometimes singly, sometimes in companies, travel down by one train and up by the next, managing from the contributions of the weakminded among their fellow passengers to pay their fares and leave a considerable margin to be carried to the credit side of their account. Of the misery inflicted on the unwilling audiences pathetic descriptions have appeared in our daily contemporaries. One writer who travels on the Great Eastern Railway tells us that "On that line the same 'melancholy youth' annoys travellers with his execrable fiddle; and as the distances between stations are greater than on the Metropolitan, he has, and uses the opportunity to add to their misery with a song. By another train a man favours us with a performance on the accordion, or, failing him, another sings some 'most (un)musical, most melancholy' ditties to a banjo accompaniment. But the worst nuisance of all is caused by a family of ill-behaved young children—boys and girls—who travel up and down by Tottenham trains, and play popular music on flute and drum, and who behave in a most rude and offensive manner in collecting coppers at the conclusion of their distracting performance." Compared with this infliction, street organs, or even German bands, are pleasant to think of, as from them there is a means of escape; but to be locked up in a railway carriage, with such companions is positively beyond the powers of endurance, even of the most stoical season ticket holder, and we therefore counsel the directors to get rid of them, as it is not improbable that the combined effects of overcrowding, tobacco smoke, and bad music may induce a suicidal mania during the hot weather.—*The Choir*.

Rid of the summer concerts, the directors of the Crystal Palace have now turned their energies upon English ballads. They could make no better provision for country cousins, or for the mass of Londoners, who would rather hear "Tom Bowline" than the finest Italian *aria* ever written. Moreover, judging by the concert of yesterday, they could take no greater precautions to have our national songs well rendered. It is superfluous to mention that Mr. Sims Reeves is the finest ballad singer of the day, or that Miss Edith Wynne now ranks among the best exponents of popular music. Both these artists were engaged yesterday. Mr. Reeves sang "The Pilgrim of Love," "The Death of Nelson," and (with Signor Foli) the ever-popular, though twaddling, "All's Well." Incomparably his finest effort was "The Death of Nelson," which he gave with a power of expression rare even for him. Miss Wynne's selections were "Tell me, my heart," and "O bid your faithful Ariel fly"—songs of which she makes good, few will say too frequent, use. Other, and scarcely less popular ballads were contributed by Mdlle. Sinico, Miss Banks, and Signor Foli. The last-named artist might have sung "Down among the Dead Men," and thus kept that fine old air out of the hands of the Crystal Palace Choir, whose tortured version, given to the accompaniment of triangle and cymbals, was in the worst taste. There was an immense audience, and, as usual at ballad concerts, immense applause. More things were repeated than we care to name.—*Pall Mall Gazette* (August 5th).

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